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Dysart discusses timeline on site-alteration bylaw

DARREN LUM

Editor

It didn't take long for the Municipality of Dysart et al Mayor Andrea Roberts to address the controversy related to the public's demand for the municipality to protect wetlands such as the one that was partially filled in on Gelert Road, which has been the lightning rod for calls for a site-alteration bylaw.

"We are all doing our best to care for this community," she said within seconds of starting the Dysart's regular meeting on Tuesday. "The onslaught of e-mails, whether it be the shoreline bylaw, or protecting our wetlands. There's such a nasty tone to some of them and it's really hurtful. We're all human beings. We're part of this community and we're doing our best as councillors, whether we're here for Dysart council, or myself and Deputy Mayor Pat Kennedy on county council," she said.

She continued, "My only message is try to be kind. To be kind to each other and try to be patient as we work through these processes. We are all doing our best. We are listening."

Director of planning and land
see DYSART page 2



Hand-in-hand on Head Lake

Julia Oosterman, from left, skates with her daughter Quinn Oosterman and husband Brett Oosterman enjoy a skate together out in a cleared area of Head Lake on Sunday, Jan. 30 in Haliburton. The Oosterman's, who are from Sarnia, were visiting the area. /Submitted by Matthew Dochstader

Incidence rate has begun to plateau: MOH

SUE TIFFIN

Staff Reporter

The following are brief reports from a Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge district health unit press conference held virtually Jan. 26 with medical officer of health Dr. Natalie Bocking.

While Bocking usually starts the session noting the total number of cases to date during the pandemic, last week's meeting was different.

"I'm not actually going to do that today, because we know that the number on our dashboard of the confirmed number of cases really is no longer an accurate reflection of what the activity of COVID-

19 is in the community," said Bocking.

Bocking said the health unit was still sharing the information, and that higher numbers were still being recorded meaning there is ongoing COVID-19 transmission and infection happening in the area.

The incidence rate, a reflection of by-population number, has started to plateau. At the peak of cases in the HKPRD
see VACCINATIONS page 2



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Dysart considering site-alteration bylaw

from page 1

information, Jeff Iles presented a report at the request of Roberts. His presentation centred on the protection of significant natural heritage features wetland and endangered or threatened species.

He said the township's official plan states the primary objective is protection enhancement of the environment, but this is at the time of development.

"Based on this objective, there are numerous policies sprinkled throughout the official plan designed to protect natural heritage features, wetlands, lakes habitat. These policies, which are vital to the protection of these features are strictly enforced at the time of development control, which is mostly the processing of planning applications. Having said that, currently there is no tool in place that enable staff to enforce these actions. So there's no law. No bylaw. Unless the official plan policies are implemented by a bylaw or some other development agreement or other agreement, they are only addressed at times of development."

Iles said the Municipal Act does provide council the authority to pass bylaws to prohibit and regulate filling and site-alteration.

"Furthermore, council has the ability to pass bylaws to implement the direction of our official plan such as the zoning bylaw having been the biggest example there," he said.

Other enforcement options exist such as with Haliburton County council, which is in the process of reviewing the proposed shoreline preservation bylaw to include site-alteration regulations. He added the bylaw, if implemented as it is presented, could regulate and would prevent site-alteration within 30 metres of lakes, water courses and wetlands.

In addition to online messages and social media posts directed to council members, there were close to two dozen letters of concern sent and included as part of the report presentation at the meeting.

The letters demanded the municipality implement a site-alteration bylaw to protect the wetlands, which

includes animal habitat and wildlife. They cited such mechanisms are necessary to ensure water quality, mitigate flooding, protection of nature and heritage.

Roberts said she and Kennedy were at the county meeting where discussion about the shoreline preservation bylaw lasted the better part of five hours. Part of the discussion referenced how "bodies of water" should include wetlands.

"The consultants Hutchinson Environmental [Sciences] were suggesting that we do include wetland and ponds, but that ended up being quite a bit of a conversation ... I know the wheels of municipal government, government in general may seem like they work painfully slow, but that's exactly, really, what we did when we delegate that authority to the county to look at strengthening the shoreline [preservation] bylaw. That's exactly what we were talking about last week," she said. "So for Dysart to undertake any bylaw of their own at this point wouldn't make any sense until we see what happens at the county. I don't know if we're any further ahead ... there's a lot more questions that day that came up than there were answers and there was very few things we sort of landed on a consensus," she said.

Roberts said she is in favour of a "compliant process" similar to the tree bylaw.

"You don't need a permit. You just can read the bylaw. You go measure the tree and if it's greater than five centimetres at a certain height, then you just can't cut it down," she said. "So, there are ways or other examples that we really haven't looked at it at the county in terms of bylaws, and other municipalities."

There was hope that a county bylaw would apply to all four municipalities, but no one envisioned the time it would have taken, Roberts said.

"We'll see where we land on that and if the county bylaw is either defeated or never comes forward or is contested then the municipality can do something on their own, but the thought was three, four years ago that we'd all work together, all four townships work together ... So, let's see where the county lands and the clock is ticking because it's an election year and so we only have

so long to go forward on this," she said.

Councillor John Smith asked about what the timeline is for when the review process for the shoreline preservation bylaw could conclude.

"How long should we wait for the county to reach a conclusion on something they've been evaluating for three of four years or more before, we, as a local municipality, take some action to protect the wetlands and other resources in our community?"

Roberts said there isn't a clear answer with many unanswered questions by some members of county council and a version of a bylaw that isn't ready to vote on at this point.

"So, I would say, really, the timeline would be this term of council," she said.

Kennedy noted how the county director of planning, Steve Stone was asked to provide information with his experience from working as the planner for the Town of Seguin where there is a bylaw for "placing or dumping or removal of fill in areas" such as shoreline areas and to land zoned Environmental Protection, which could move the process closer to establishing a draft of a bylaw for the following county council meeting.

"I sympathize with councillor Smith that at some point, I think we probably should act on a site-alteration bylaw, perhaps with a limit, so it only affects properties that have natural hazards with that type of thing. So it's not everybody having to do a site that doesn't have environmental protected areas on it has to move forward with that initiative of only maybe eliminating site-alteration bylaws. I think the clock is ticking on it. It's a decision we should make before the end of term of this council, so that staff can start to prepare options for us to look at a local level. I don't see any problem with us working concurrently," Kennedy said.

Iles said he would look to learn about updates related to what the Ministry of Environment is doing about the wetland at the Gelert Road property, which is on land zoned Environmental Protection.

Vaccinations helping prevent severity of illness and death

from page 1

region, there were above 500 cases per 100,000. The last week prior to the meeting, though an underestimate still due to limited testing, the incidence rate has been stabilizing at 250 cases per 100,000 which is still much higher activity than had generally been seen previously. Prior to the highly contagious Omicron variant, the region was seeing five to six cases per 100,000. At the peak of the third wave last spring and early summer, there were 90 cases per 100,000.

Test positivity has been about the same, around 12 to 13 per cent, which Bocking said is "much better" than 23 per cent a few weeks ago, but much higher than the two to three per cent being seen prior to the Omicron wave.

Measures preventing severity of illness a 'positive light'

Looking at summarized data since Jan. 1, Bocking said since the beginning of the year the health unit's region has seen 39 admissions to hospital, 12 admissions to ICU and nine deaths from COVID-19.

"This is certainly the highest number of hospital admissions and ICU admissions than we've seen throughout the pandemic," she noted. As of the time of the briefing, 20 residents across the region had been admitted to hospital with 10 in the ICU.

"What's different about the Omicron wave compared to say the first wave of the pandemic, was [during] the first wave of the pandemic, we didn't have any vaccines and we found out that our most elderly residents, especially those in LTC homes and retirement homes were significantly impacted, with some homes seeing very high mortality with COVID-19," Bocking said.

Of the nine deaths since Jan. 1, four of those are associated with residents of LTC.

"So it's not that Omicron is a totally mild illness, it can cause severe illness, but we have other measures in place that are also helping to prevent that same severity of illness and death that we saw with the first wave of the pandemic," Bocking said. "I think that's a positive light throughout all of this."

Among the 39 residents admitted to hospitals since Jan. 1, 49 per cent, or almost half of those individuals, had not received any vaccinations, representing almost 50 per cent of hospital admissions, said Bocking. Only 10 - 15 per cent of the population is not vaccinated, she said, and there is a higher risk of needing admission to hospital for those unvaccinated.

More hospital admissions among older age groups

Statistics looking at hospital admissions show 53 per cent associated with residents 70 and older.

Two hospital admissions occurred for those under the age of 20 - one under 10-years-old and in the age group of 11 to 20.

"It's uncommon for this region, we have not had many pediatric hospitalizations throughout the pandemic, and there's certainly no evidence that this is causing more severe illness in children but if we do the math, if there's more infection, even if it's a relatively rare event it might happen more often with Omicron," Bocking said.

In terms of ICU admissions, of those 12 individuals, 67 per cent were unvaccinated and 41 per cent over the age 70 and above. The vast majority were older than 60.

Vaccination rates

Bocking said vaccination continues to be one of the most important tools available to try to blunt the impact of Omicron on residents and hospitals.

Of those 70 and older, 79 per cent have received their booster. Of those 50 and older, 66 per cent of people have received their third dose. Of those 18 and older, 53.6 per cent have received their booster dose.

For kids aged five to 11, who became eligible for vaccinations at the beginning of December, 44.8 per cent have received their first dose.

Mental health during the fifth wave

"We know that this pandemic has had so many negative impacts on all facets of people's lives contributing to challenges with mental wellness, mental health, and then an increase in mental health conditions across our communities," said Bocking.

"I think one of the things that is most important about 'Let's Talk' day, is acknowledging the stigma with mental health conditions, talking about the stigma associated with mental health conditions and then helping hopefully to eliminate the stigma associated with mental health conditions."

Bocking said it is known that stigma contributes significantly to ongoing suffering by individuals with mental health conditions.

"All of us have a role to play in creating the space for not just individuals impacted by their own mental health condition, but by family members, friends, community members, to create that space where they feel safe and welcome and acknowledged and don't have the fear associated with sharing their challenges associated with mental health," she said. "I think the most important thing we can all be doing right now is continue to be kind to each other, to acknowledge that we all have challenges in many different areas of our lives, and that we're all doing the best that we can to continue to get through this pandemic."

The kids are back in-class – now what?

NICK BERNARD

Staff Reporter

Trillium Lakelands District School Board (TLDSB) director Wes Hahn observed a mood of fatigue tinged with hope during his Director's Update at the board's regular meeting on Jan. 25.

"As we enter the third calendar year of this pandemic, people are tired. Families are tired, staff are tired," he said, expressing his gratitude for teachers, staff, and families during the transition back to in-person learning. "But you know, out in a school today and seeing the energy ... there's a lot of positive feelings about where we're going."

He also outlined how the board was keeping parents in the loop, now that COVID testing and reporting falls on the board's shoulders.

"Daily reporting of attendance occurs from our schools into the [Ontario government's] absentee reporting tool, and then the following day, that information is uploaded and posted in the ministry site," Hahn explained. He also reiterated that the reported absentee data encom-

pass both student and staff absences, as well as absences for reasons unrelated to COVID-19.

Currently, the threshold for class and school closures is an absentee rate of 30 per cent, a guideline Hahn says has been used by public health units for the monitoring of other communicable diseases.

"I think we have created a situation where we are creating confidence," Hahn said.

Staff have also been supplied with PPE, and a screening process for students is in place. HEPA air filters have also been delivered to all schools, which Hahn says puts the board well within Ministry guidelines for air filtration.

Hahn also said that the Ontario government's COVID-19 screener, in combination with the rapid antigen testing kits that students receive through the board, has been helpful for students and staff to gauge their safety in the school building.

"I'm sure [testing kits], along with our screener has helped really ... inform them before they enter the building the next day, whether they've tested positive or whether the screener has made them aware that they could be at risk, and not

to enter the building," Hahn explained.

The board will also be hosting vaccination clinics in some schools for students aged five to 11, with parent permission. Dates for those clinics have yet to be announced.

Students and staff can use the Ontario government's COVID-19 screening tool at covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/.

The province's school absentee data is updated daily, and can be found at www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-school-closures-and-absenteeism.

Strategic plan 2022-2027 released to a warm reception

Director Hahn presented the TLDSB's 2022-2027 strategic plan to the board. In his presentation, he described collaborating with staff, students, parents, and community partners to get their impressions on what the board's priorities should be over the next five years.

"We really looked at some guiding principles that would help us engage our stakeholders and our staff and our students," Hahn said, describing the plan's

two main goals of supporting meaningful learning, and creating learning spaces that foster equity, inclusion, and belonging.

Each goal is presented with commitments the board intends to make to students, staff, and the community, framed around statements that say "we will."

"They're very powerful," Hahn said of that particular phrasing. "And we believe they're commitment statements that we need to abide by ... we think this is an important part of this plan that holds us accountable."

A motion to pass the plan was swiftly voted into approval by board trustees, with trustee Judy Saunders praising the document for its plain but engaging language.

"[The plan] is something that is actually engaging – at least I find it engaging," she said, describing her impressions of the plan. "The simple, clean lines of this document, and the simple, unpointed message that the document is putting out there."

The TLDSB's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan is available to view at www.tldsb.ca/board/strategic-directions/.

Opportunity to enhance downtown with successful application

My Main Street Community Activator Program worth up to \$250,000 for improvements

DARREN LUM

Editor

The following are brief reports of items discussed at the regular council meeting of Dysart et al council on Jan. 25, held virtually.

Dysart et al staff is taking a step to enhancing the downtown of Haliburton by applying for the My Main Street Community Activator Program, which its website (mymainstreet.ca) said "provides support for community projects in southern Ontario designed to draw visitors and increase local vibrancy."

The program's funding ranges from \$25,000 to \$250,000 and will be focused on improvements to draw visitors and keep them in the Haliburton downtown, whether it's to utilize the public WiFi or dine in the park with takeout from local restaurants.

This funding is possible by the Federal Economic Development Agency for South Ontario and the My Main Street is a partnership between the Economic Development Council of Ontario and the Canadian Urban Institute.

The township is working with the Rails End Gallery for a proposed project to focus on the York Street area for "above ground infrastructure," which includes the addition of colour-changing soffit lighting on the Rails End Gallery building to correlate to special days such as orange in September for Truth and Reconciliation Day and

multi-coloured in June for Pride Month, solar powered outdoor workstations where people using the public WiFi can work, metal picnic tables with built in seating (accessible and non-accessible), so people can take in the sights, enjoy their meals, visit the Haliburton County Farmers' Market in Head Lake Park, and signage will be added at tables to highlight local attractions and a year-round lighting display, which will highlight an attraction such as a sculpture where tourists can take selfies and post images to social media.

Dysart et al CAO Tamara Wilbee said this grant is for the Dysart downtown, but the "round tables" already budgeted by the municipality could be used in other communities outside the downtown, as a response to Deputy Mayor Pat Kennedy's request for how Harcourt or West Guilford could benefit.

Councillor John Smith, who appreciated Kennedy's question, said even if there is a focus on the downtown of Haliburton and its history, it's important to not forget the history of the entire municipality, which includes hunting and fishing, and the lumber industry up in Haliburton Forest and Wild Life Reserve Ltd.

Wilbee agreed with Smith and said, "And that's another component of the project that if we're successful we'd suggest putting it through the cultural resources committee as well for input, but we would pass along those sentiments as well that we'd like to include the entire community because part of it might be like, say, a sim-

ple sign put onto the tables that let people know where the Sculpture Forest is, or that people, like you said, major attractions, but throughout the whole community."

Mayor Andrea Roberts said this opportunity is only possible because of the new position of procurement and grants coordinator, Jennifer Covert.

"So it's fabulous we have Jennifer on staff to be able to apply and manage these projects. So, it's great, great news," she said.

The municipality is targeting the upper end of the funding, but finalized quotes are outstanding, so a final total was not revealed at the meeting. The application due date is Feb. 1.

Three dates for Hazardous Waste Day

Dysart et al is giving residents three opportunities to dispose of household hazardous waste on July 9 at the Haliburton landfill, Aug. 28 at the Harcourt landfill and Sept. 17 at the West Guilford landfill. Due to provincial regulations, these hazardous waste day events are not for businesses and organizations. See the township website for options available to businesses and organizations.

While three dates for Dysart et al are less than other municipalities with less population in Haliburton County, they have proven to have drawn well (in terms of tonnage collected) enough to not warrant additional dates unlike the other municipi-

palities with more dates offered.

In a few weeks, staff from all four municipalities of Haliburton County will be presenting an inter-municipal agreement that could permit any Haliburton County resident with a valid landfill card to attend any of the hazardous household waste materials events in 2022, which will include up to 14 locations.

Let your fingers do the walking, mailing

Tax bills are going out and the Municipality of Dysart et al is encouraging residents to go online to pay their bills. Just like online banking, the township offers online tax payments.

"It's not an automatic withdrawal, I believe, but I certainly know I pay mine online and it was easy to set up as you do your online banking ... reducing the extra steps that cheques take when we receive them to have to deposit them," Roberts said.

Residents are asked to ensure they have their 15-digit roll number.

Treasurer Barbara Swannell said the online option has been a success during the pandemic.

"We can thank COVID for that," she said. "However, it is very typical of the finance group to educate ratepayers on how they can pay their tax bill and encourage them to hop on to some of the pre-authorized programs."

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NOMINATIONS WANTED

Haliburton County schools reporting absence rates of 16% or higher

SUE TIFFIN

Staff Reporter

Two weeks after staff and students returned to in-person learning at schools, schools across Haliburton County were reporting absence rates of 17 to 36 per cent.

While the Ministry of Education is no longer reporting on positive cases of COVID-19 in the staff and student population, as of Jan. 25, combined percentages of staff and student absences are being reported at ontario.ca/page/covid-19-school-closures-and-absenteeism. The absences could include those that are not related to COVID-19, including medical appointments or due to religious holidays.

In the Jan. 31 update, which includes information from the previous Friday, Archie Stouffer Elementary School in Minden was reporting a 29.1 per cent rate of absence. Cardiff Elementary School had reported a 21.1 per cent rate of absence, while Wilberforce Elementary School had a 38.6 per cent rate of absence. In Haliburton, Stuart Baker Elementary School was reporting 22.4 per cent of staff and students being absent, and J. Douglas Hodgson had a 22.8 per cent rate of absence. Haliburton Highlands Secondary School was reporting a 24.4 per cent absence rate.

"Schools are monitoring this data closely and when a school is close to the 30 per cent threshold of absences due to illness, the board will work closely with our public health units to determine the next steps together," reads the Trillium Lakelands District School Board website. "Should the number of illnesses (either in students or staff, or both) be too high to maintain a healthy and safe school, a class or entire school will move to remote learning temporarily. If there is a situation where there are multiple staff absences due to illness, or the inability to fill those absences with occasional teachers, the school may need to close for a short period of time and asynchronous learning (without a live teacher) will be available but no remote learning will be offered. This information will be communicated with the school community."

As of Jan. 31, 8 of the 4,844 schools in Ontario, or 0.17 per cent, were closed due to operational impacts of COVID-19.

Data is current as of 2 p.m. the previous business day and is updated by 10:30 a.m. excluding weekends and public holidays.

"Each day, the school principal, superintendent, and director of education are in communication with one another with respect to absences, particularly the number of individuals who are absent due to illness," reads the TLDSB website. "If there are high levels of illnesses

“

Schools are monitoring this data closely and when a school is close to the 30 per cent threshold of absences due to illness, the board will work closely with our public health units to determine the next steps together.

— TLDSB website

within a class, the superintendent and principal may jointly make the decision to move a class to remote learning for a short period of time. If a teacher is ill, the class will continue to be held in person at the school and a supply teacher will teach the class until the teacher is able to return. If the teacher is well but isolating due to a close contact, the class will continue to be held in person at the school and the class will receive instruction from their teacher who will join the class remotely. The class will be supervised."

All COVID-19 information and updates are available at tldsbc.ca/covid19.

At press time, TLDSB had not provided data regarding school absence rates prior to the pandemic.



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Finding salvation at the mic

Canoe FM's Patrick Monaghan celebrated his 300th show

DARREN LUM

Editor

Life. It's not something Patrick Monaghan takes for granted.

The radio announcer of the popular, award-winning Buckslide Blues Cruise show just celebrated his 300th show last week. It was a milestone he didn't know he would make, having been told he wasn't going to live until Christmas because of the pancreatic cancer he's had endured for the last few years.

Right before going live last Tuesday at 7 p.m., he said, "I shut my eyes for a few seconds before I hit the button and I just said, be professional."

There was a proverbial exhale for the radio announcer with that show, he said.

"It was almost a breath of relief. The anxiety is gone ... it was a real challenge to get to 300," he said.

Monaghan's passion for music, particularly the blues is palpable and evident by how he sings along with the music during his show at the community radio station,

located on Maple Avenue across from the A.J. LaRue Arena. He was recognized for his efforts he puts towards each of his weekly shows held Tuesdays from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. with the Best Jazz or Blues Music Show by the National Campus and Community Radio Association in 2020.

He said reaching 300 is on equal footing with winning that award.

"They're both up there. Oh, they're both up there," he said.

His message to his listeners was thank you.

"I'm very grateful for all the people in my life that have come out to help and then make things so much easier," he said.

Monaghan said his life with cancer has been challenging and this show will continue to give him purpose.

"Going forward, I have a reason to get up in the morning and then work away at shows and it's not just all the medical appointments. So, it's really been a life-blood for me," he said. "When I push that button [to go live] I'm okay for a couple of hours."



Canoe FM announcer Patrick Monaghan is a testament to radio, having aired his 300th Buckslide Blues Cruise Show. The weekly show, which runs every Tuesday from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., has been a driving force for him since being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. / DARREN LUM Staff

Submissions open for Rails End Art and Craft Festival

NICK BERNARD

Staff Reporter

The Rails End Gallery and Arts Centre curator Laurie Jones said a creative vibe happens when a bunch of makers get together in a park for a few days. That theory gets put to the test this summer as the Art and Craft Festival returns to Head Lake Park from July 22 - 24.

This will be the first time the festival has been held since 2019, and while the gallery has been able to hold exhibits during the pandemic, Jones sees the festival's return as a reconnection to culture locally.

"What we feel is that a sense of belonging brings purpose to life, and that creativity and sharing of creativity ... is really important to people," Jones said, describing themes the gallery has explored in past exhibits during the pandemic. "What we do is, we use the creative arts, and engagement with them, to ... help to support human connection."

Jones said this year the gallery is looking for work that is innovative, something that answers the question of "what's new," especially after the downtime provided by the pandemic.

"I imagine there's artists and craftspeople who have been able to use the time to turn inward and look at what they're doing and get better at what they do," she said. "We look for work ... that's innovative, that has a degree of excellence in its construction, or that shows that [it] took something to make."

Artists who are interested in participating are able to fill out a form, with all potential vendors being reviewed by the gallery's selection committee.

There will be a show inside the gallery leading up to the festival, where artists and craftspeople who are accepted into the festival will have the chance to exhibit their passion projects.

"We'll invite them to put something into the show that is not production work, it's something that they want to share with the public," Jones explained. "It's going to be something unusual, for them,

or perhaps [something] they truly love to do ... Everybody's got something else on the go."

Jones said she faces a number of logistical challenges that need to be addressed head on, including any developments that could result from the rapidly changing COVID situation.

"We never thought there'd be a fourth wave," she said. "Who knows what'll happen? And really, once people descend on Haliburton again ... everything will change again."

She is also concerned for many of her volunteers, and making sure they are not put at risk for contracting COVID-19. As a result, Jones says one of the things she's looking into is a contactless method of collecting donations.

Susan Watson Ellis, a jeweler in Haliburton who owns Paradigm Designs has been a participant in the festival for more than 20 years. She says she's thrilled to see its return.

"The show organizers work hard to make this a special event and welcoming to vendors and customers alike," Watson Ellis said in describing why the festival is important to her. "I feel it is extremely important as a local art studio to have the visibility and new customer contacts that this show provides."

Jones offered a number of tips and insights for what the festival is looking for, especially for anyone who may be new, or hesitant to submit their art.

"If your thing is detailing, you want to draw ... or [bring] attention to how great your stitchery is, or how great your technique is ... give us a close-up," she explained, saying that applicants should send in at least six pictures of their art. "Pictures are important. You don't get a second chance. I don't get to see the actual object."

Jones said art is competitive, and that she's unafraid to let people know when they need more practice.

"That's what keeps people getting better and improving," she said. "Keeps everybody going back to the studio."

Artist submissions are open until

March 18.

Applications and information on the Art and Craft Festival can be found at the Rails End Gallery and Arts Centre web-

site at railsendgallery.com/haliburton-art-and-craft.



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Forever in our memories: Creighton Feir

Protesting is a freedom

THERE WAS a certain level of anxiety that I felt after seeing footage of angry protesters waving Canadian Flags with the “Freedom Convoy” at Parliament Hill.

It wasn’t because they were protesting, but how they were protesting and what they perceive to be the loss of our freedoms. There was a lot of anger and it bothered me they were so aggressive with reporters trying to do their job on the street. It’s ironic the protesters were shouting about fighting for freedom, but at the same time making people leave a public space. Footage about a person dancing on the grave of the Unknown Soldier, images of Nazi flags, reports of incidents at a downtown soup kitchen, and how Ottawa paramedics had rocks thrown at them and were impeded in doing their jobs muddies the protest’s credibility. It’s cost Ottawa \$800,000 a day in police services since the arrival of the convoy of a few hundred vehicles and thousands of people.

The convoy started a few thousand kilometres before with the central idea of being anti-vaccine mandates.

From the Freedom Convoy 2022 page on Facebook, it said, “the Government of Canada has crossed a line with implementing COVID-19 vaccine passports and vaccine mandates.”

After this weekend, the movement has shown itself to have taken on other causes associated to hate that I believe take away from the trucker’s grievances. It’s important we don’t forget the truckers, who are out there delivering our goods. Many that didn’t participate and disagree. It’s been reported that close to 90 per cent of truckers are vaccinated.

I recognize we’ve lost a lot with the pandemic. I want to watch the Canadian soccer team at a bar with a bunch of other screaming people, wearing red and white. I want to see my mother’s smile and her eyes light up with recognition in the light of day. I’m not saying don’t protest. This is still a free

country, and people here are allowed to protest regardless of any perceived loss of freedom. However, when protests infringe on others and create an atmosphere of intimidation then it’s time to reevaluate the protest. The message definitely gets lost. On Jan. 15, the federal government implemented the vaccine mandate to cross-border truckers, but so did the U.S. shortly after. It’s worth noting public health orders and proof of vaccination is largely the jurisdiction of the province. Hello, Doug Ford.

By Sunday, my anxiety was displaced by people celebrating the Canadian men’s soccer team’s 2-nil victory over the Americans in World Cup qualifying game by waving flags not in frustration and anger, but with joy, and hope for something that the country can get behind without debate. It was heartwarming to see what has become a regular post-game celebration. An entire stadium of people in Hamilton clapped with hands over head in time with the slow beat on a large drum played by Canadian Jonathan Osorio surrounded by his teammates, as an action to show the audience they are appreciated.

With the win, the Canadians sit at the top of the table for qualifying in the CONCACAF region, the Canadians have virtually punched their ticket to the greatest soccer championship in the world. A win in El Salvador this Wednesday and a some help – other teams losing – will guarantee the World Cup berth to play in Qatar this year. It’s something they haven’t done in 36 years, so the significance isn’t lost on the team nor its supporters. When their journey started back in March, this team believed. They have exhibited courage and resolve despite the odds. I too believe in this team, what it represents for sport and for how we can come together as country despite our difference. Let’s just do it in a civil manner, respectful of and appreciative of everyone.



darren lum

Editorial



Sky reachers

by Darren Lum

A reflection on what grounds us

ONE THING about a dog is that they love you every morning, whether it is 30 degrees Celsius or negative 30 degrees Celsius. They want your company and are ready to walk in all conditions.

And, so for all the years that we have had a dog, we start our day with a walk. I love it for many reasons, one of which is walking among the trees. I’ve walked the same forest for more than 30 years and the trees are big, quiet, beautiful and still companions. Always good company. One of the interesting things about trees is that we can see their trunks, branches, leaves and critters that all live above the ground. We can see their beauty and magnificence and strength and uniqueness. However, what we can’t see is what lies beneath the surface of the earth, which is the roots of the trees. Without seeing them, we know that there are roots that go down deep and it is these roots that nourish the tree. The tree that we can see is beautiful and healthy because it is fed, supported and grounded by what we cannot see. The roots go deep and can travel quite a distance.

I just started reading a book called *Finding the Mother Tree* by Suzanne Simard. In her book Suzanne talks about the underground lives of trees. She suggests that the trees are communicating with each other through their roots. She goes on to talk about the idea that trees are social, cooperative creatures that connect in their own kind of community. They support each other, share information, mount defences, recognize neighbours, compete and cooperate with

each other and they are connected to each other through their roots.

I think about this as I walk these days. I love contemplating the idea that what we can’t see is feeding, nourishing, supporting and promoting growth and well being. Perhaps we are like this as well. We all have disciplines, habits, rituals that are supporting us in our every day lives. We are all unique, and yet at some level we are connected. We are supported by and connected to our neighbours, our friends, our family

members, our pets and the beauty that is around us. We are connected in small quiet ways that we may not even realize and yet it makes a difference. I think at this point in the pandemic it is easy for us (for me) to feel alone, separated, disconnected and perhaps sad or angry. Sometimes I even feel a sense of hopelessness. And then I get up and I go for a walk among the trees. I feel like it

is a chance to re-set every morning. I connect with nature and with beauty and with my husband and dog. And I remember that like the trees I have roots that go deep and that are connected and supported in so many ways. I don’t have to understand it all, but instead trust that I am part of a community that loves me. When you do something every day, or on a regular basis, it becomes a habit and these simple habits are what can sustain us in all of the challenges that life brings us. We are incredibly lucky to live in a county where we have so many trees around us. Really, they are the best company in these times.

Tales from
the great



lynda shadbolt

Green meadow

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points of view

Get out

A FRIEND OF mine called me this morning and told me that he had got approval from his wife to purchase an inflatable float tube for fishing and all the associated gear – which will require no small amount of money.

Naturally, I wanted more information on how he achieved this daunting task.

"I just told her I needed to spend somewhere around \$500 to buy a fishing tool," he said.

For those who are not anglers, let me point out that when an angler says "around \$500" what he or she really means is somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$46,980, depending on the accessories and supporting items required to make the purchase achieve its full potential.

Linda is no fool. She knows this. And yet she still said yes. "Did she say anything before giving you the green light?" I asked.

"Yes," Tom said. "She asked if it would get me out of the house."

It was just as I suspected.

Friends, we are in the midst of a perfect storm.

You see, normally winter is a reasonable time to propose frivolous purchases because our partners are already suffering from cabin fever and us being in the cabin doesn't help. What does help is the thought of anything that will get us out of the house. So, if you propose something that will fulfill that wish, it stands a decent chance of success.

Fortunately, the added pressures of the pandemic, which

require couples to spend even more time together, works in our favour here too. Your partner wants so much to get you out of his or her personal space that they would agree to just about any stupid thing that helps attain that goal.

I suspect that's why 90 per cent of those truckers are in Ottawa right now.

What I am saying is there has never been a better time to ask your partner if it is OK to build a working catapult in the backyard.

For, if you do, their response will very likely be, "So long as it gets you out of the house."

I'm not just putting out another theory here. This time, I tested it. And it worked.

Right after I got off the phone with Tom, I searched the house and found Jenn reading a book. The fact that she was under a blanket in the laundry room holding a flashlight in her teeth while reading that book made me suspect that she might be yearning for a little alone time too.

"Perfect," I thought.

"Jenn," I said. "Would it be OK if I went and purchased everything I need to build a launch pad and rocket that will take me into space so I can be the first non-billionaire, non-astronaut to orbit the planet? I found a reputable website that says I can do it for around \$500."

Jenn looked at me for a moment and then said two things. "Is that the space suit you will be wearing?" she began.

"Yes," I replied. "I repurposed an old set of pajamas and a fishbowl. So, can I? Huh? Huh?"

She gave it a little thought and then said, "Yes, so long as it gets you out of the house."

So, as you can clearly see, this theory holds up. In fact, I even told Jenn that I was going to do a few modifications to the rocket, such as add a second layer of protective-cardboard, so people will finally be able to refer to me as a rocket scientist without smirking.

She just looked at me, nodded and said, "Have a blast."



steve
galea

Loon Tales



Town Hall, Haliburton, Ont.

pic of the past

This early 20th Century postcard view of the Town Hall (built in 1897) is just bustling with activity! The field next to the Hall was historically used as a cricket pitch, but in this pic it almost looks like there might be racing about to happen ...! Submitted by Kate Butler of Haliburton Highlands Museum. Text republished with permission from a Twitter post by the museum.

Request for road repairs

To the Editor,

The following is an open letter to the councillors who decide on road repairs:

1: Please, don't overfill potholes during repairs. Unfortunately, road staff consistently overfill potholes with the result that dips become bumps. Bumps are unpleasant and hard on vehicles. From a safety viewpoint, bumps slow down fire and ambulance emergency vehicles. As well, avoidance of bumps on curves can cause accidents. Overfilling also wastes materials and tax dollars. Whether through instruction/supervision and followup, or new methods/machinery, please ensure road staff fill potholes to leave behind a level surface.

2: Improve life expectancy of road resurfacing. Our road, Soyers Lake Road, was regraded and

resurfaced not long ago with such poor workmanship/materials/standards that it needs to be redone. The engineering report presented to Township of Minden Hills council [on Jan. 27] agreed that deterioration was severe enough to need resurfacing. In my experience the lowest quality, least expensive solution is often the most expensive. I would ask that council ask the engineers who presented the report to offer cost effective suggestions regarding materials/quality control (in construction and maintenance), and expectations for longevity so that we could get long term guarantees from contractors that will do the work. Your job is a difficult one. I thank you for your consideration.

Paul Zalan, MD
Minden

Extend care to health services

To the Editor,

Dear friends and neighbours of Haliburton County.

The pandemic has been very hard on us all. Concern for our personal health and safety, as well as our loved ones, uncertainty about what lies ahead, and changing regulations – it has been a lot.

Through it all, healthcare workers (and many others in our community) have stepped up in countless ways. The incredible staff at Haliburton Highlands Health Services have been making an 'all-hands-on-deck' effort for nearly two years, and even though they are absolutely exhausted, they keep showing up for our community, day in and day out.

As I've said in the past, the best way to support them is to follow public health measures – get vaccinated, get boosted, wear a mask in public spaces, reduce your contact, physical distance, and wash your hands.

I also need to ask that you help us create a safe and respectful workplace for our staff, and safe space for clients, family, volunteers, students, donors and visitors.

That means treating staff and others in our facilities with respect and dignity, not engaging in bullying or name calling, and remaining calm in your interactions. Any acts or threats of physical violence, disruptive behaviour, harassment or agreement will absolutely not be tolerated.

We also ask that you protect the privacy of our patients and staff by not taking photos, videos, or audio recordings in our facilities.

It has been a long two years, and we know everyone is tired. We must continue to put kindness first, look out for one another, and do all we can to keep each other healthy and safe.

Take care.

Carolyn Plummer
HHHS president and CEO

Haliburton bound

A snowmobile rider drives along the B103 trail where it crosses Gould Crossing a few minutes out of the village of Haliburton on Sunday, Jan. 30. The current trail status of B103 is listed as "limited availability" or yellow in the red, yellow and green criteria for trail status. Red means unavailable and green means available. The Haliburton County Snowmobile Association asks riders to heed the ratings and to respect private property. The HCSA is responsible for 370 kilometres in the Highlands. See ofsc.evtails.com/# for a map that shows trail conditions and trail status.
/DARREN LUM Staff



op-ed

Other priorities more important than shoreline bylaw

On Jan. 17, Haliburton County council spent six hours on a line-by-line review of the latest draft of the proposed shoreline bylaw.

Following review and discussion, it became apparent that even after three years the proposal is still not well enough thought through to be ready for a vote.

Many important issues currently face Haliburton County and the lower tier councils (including budgets/taxes, affordable housing, economic development, connectivity, COVID 19, etc.). Does it make sense to continue focusing so many resources on this issue?

Kawagama resident John McHardy, who analyzed over 13,000 Love Your Lake assessments while serving on the CHA Board, found that "45 per cent of the shoreline on 60 of the County's largest lakes were in 'Natural' condition with another 30 per cent in 'Regenerative' condition – already very close to the desirable 75 per cent target without an in-effect by-law. Despite extensive council time and resources over the past three years, there isn't an urgent need to be addressed here."

"We all need to take care of our shared shoreline buffer. We should replant significant clear spaces with native species. We need to ensure our septic systems work properly and not use fertilizers on our lawns," McHardy said.

Considerable discussion has focused on the application/permit process. County businesses – landscapers, site services companies, and builders – have repeatedly explained to both consultants and politicians how complex and expensive the proposed permit process is. Many council members recognize the need to simplify the permit process, and reduce the required amount of costly expert opinion.

Arguably the most controversial issue

is shoreline buffer depth, although council only spent about 20 minutes discussing this before moving on without resolution.

Kennisis resident Rod Dobson notes that Professor Barb Elliot, in the Ribbon of Life Video on the CHA website, advises that only three metres is required.

He also notes that most major site alterations occur when a property is first developed.

"Rather than take our rights away, why not have the 30-meter buffer only apply to newly created lots?" he suggests.

The county proposes to add three staff members and several hundred thousand dollars to the budget to handle permits and enforcement under this bylaw.

"With other important priorities facing the county, is this the most pressing need to warrant tax increases?" asked Dobson.

Another Kennisis resident, Peter Smith, notes that Prince Edward Island, one of the most studied and environmentally-sensitive provinces in Canada, set its shoreline buffers at 15 metres. He asks, "Why would Haliburton need to double this?"

Smith is also concerned that, even if council resolves all outstanding issues, all four lower tier councils will likely require time to consider whether to delegate authority for site-alteration to the county.

Another special meeting will likely be scheduled soon to continue the discussion. Given its non-urgent nature, many voters are questioning whether this should be such a high priority for the various councils to devote even more time and resources to?

Perhaps all that is required is to find a way to make the existing tree bylaw enforceable.

Submitted by Brian Atkins

Appreciation for support from Wee Care

My name is Denise Wolm, I am the administrator at Haliburton Wee Care, meaning I'm the one that is ultimately responsible for the decisions made at the child day care facility, which can bring criticism, but I am also given praise when things go well. That being said, I couldn't do my job without Tanya Cowen, who is the supervisor and is an incredible partner and friend in all of this, and all of the other amazing members of our family/team.

We've had our ups and downs, and to say these last two years has been stressful is an understatement, but we're a family and we are there for each other at every turn.

As everyone is probably aware, child care has rarely been mentioned throughout this pandemic except to say that, after the first lockdown. We must remain open no matter what. We are essential to keep the economy rolling. We get thrown little tidbits of how valuable we are, but when it comes to our well-being and protection, we are pretty low on the list. Information is doled out for us to decipher, sometimes two to three, even four times a week. It's ever-changing and often makes no sense, but we soldier on and do the best we can with the information we are given.

So, the reason for my story today is not to complain about government politics and policies, it is to say, that after almost 22 months COVID has now touched us personally. Yes, we have not had one single case ... until now. One case or ten, or anywhere in between, it is overwhelming and stressful for everyone involved.

We understand the severity of the spread of this new variant. We understand that opening up schools would accelerate this spread. We also understand that it was inevitable that this would happen given how people are feeling "done" with this and want to just live their lives. However, when you're living in and caring for the second most vulnerable population, preceded only by seniors in congregate settings, we are fully aware that we can't be just "done" with this.

Our little ones can't and don't wear masks, social distancing isn't even fathomable in the under four-year-old set, and when they are hurt, sick or even just sad we can't stop and think about COVID, we just do what we always do and give them our love and undivided attention. To top that off, new cleaning protocols were put in place "to stop the spread", adding another layer of responsibility to those already stretched to the limit.

So, rather than blowing up the media with a sordid story of COVID in our local child care centre let me tell you something else...we have an incredible community I can say I'm proud to be a part of.

Our Haliburton Wee Care family includes our staff and their families, our children and their families, and our supporters such as Point in Time, City of Kawartha Lakes Children's Services Department and, yes, Public Health (they too are short staffed, overwhelmed and expected to provide all of the answers to the community in all different settings).

Once the announcement was made that we have COVID in our centre there was no judgment, there were no harsh words of derision, there was no blame. What there was is staff pulling together to support each other through an even more stressful time, even while they were fearful about bringing it home to their loved ones. There were parents/family members offering words of support, encouragement, and even praise as to how we have been handling everything previously and currently. Even once the decision to close the centre for the remainder of the week was made, there was nothing but support. There has been nothing but compassion and understanding from everyone and from the bottom of my heart, with tears of appreciation in my eyes, I thank everyone for this. We will get through this together as we always have.

Submitted by Wee Care administrator
Denise Wolm

High rates of poverty, unemployment pose challenges for Haliburton County

County's community safety and well-being plan potential resolution for challenges

STEPHEN PETRICK

Special to the Echo

New data showing high poverty and unemployment rates, amid a population growth and a housing crunch, shed light on the steep challenges Haliburton County will face as it embarks on a plan to address homelessness, poverty, mental health issues and health care access.

A trove of statistics were unveiled at a special meeting of Haliburton County council on Jan. 26 to discuss the county's progress on a community safety and well-being plan.

The report, delivered by Lauren Wyman of StrategyCorp, a firm hired to gather data and speak to groups about the plan, showed several concerning trends.

Among the notable statistics unveiled was that the unemployment rate in the county has fluctuated around two points above the provincial average of 7.4 per cent, at 9.6 per cent. Also Haliburton County has a child poverty rate of 23 per cent and an overall poverty rate of 17.2 per cent.

"The persisting poverty rates in the county are attributed in part to low, non-living wage incomes, low-paying seasonal work and to the high number of pensioners," the report said.

Also, "in 2019, 13.5 per cent of households in Haliburton County and Kawartha Lakes faced food access challenges (e.g. not having enough to eat, limited access to quality foods, or wor-

ries about having enough to eat) due to financial challenges."

On education, the report noted that 16.1 per cent of county residents do not have a high school diploma. And the rate of those aged 25 to 64 with post-secondary education is 55.6 per cent, down from the provincial rate of 67 per cent.

The report noted that Haliburton County, between 2011 and 2016, experienced a population growth rate of 5.9 per cent, a rate above the provincial average of 4.6 per cent.

This growth adds to housing challenges. The report said, "Housing stock is significantly low in the county, posing challenges for residents across income levels. There is a general lack of housing available across the continuum 98.5 per cent of residents in the county reside in homes that are considered suitable – meaning that there are enough bedrooms for each dweller. While housing conditions may be considered suitable in terms of size, anecdotal evidence from service providers indicates that housing conditions, regardless of size, may be substandard."

On crime, the report said "between 2018 and 2020, violation against person crimes decreased by 7 per cent from 150 to 140; whereas violation of property crimes increased by 11 per cent from 270 to 303 incidents. From 2017 - 2020 there was a slight uptick in 911 calls related to social disorder (e.g., domestic disputes, unwanted persons, keep the peace, and trespassing). There was a single reported hate crime in the County in 2020."

The report was delivered to set in

motion a plan to have groups works together to address these issues.

StrategyCorp proposed 12 goals for the county to adopt. They were to:

- Align policy priorities across existing programs.
- Develop wraparound support for community members struggling to access housing.
- Continue to support service provider collaboration and information sharing.
- Elevate existing service integration and information sharing efforts to alleviate poverty.
- Identify innovative opportunities to address food insecurity.
- Increase access to, and awareness of, mental health and addiction support services.
- Co-design and develop experience-based mental health and addiction and substance use support services and programs.
- Improve education, awareness, and information sharing on substance use and addiction, harm reduction, and mental health.
- Increase awareness on the importance of physical movement and increase access to active transportation as a central mode of mobility.
- Develop a Health Equity Working Group to support equal access to health across priority groups such as low-income, BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and seniors.
- And enhance and expand service scope of virtual care for health and mental health.

Haliburton County councillors voted to receive the report. A second resolution

“

One of the greatest values of this plan is its ability to break down silos, share data, create change ... to develop a plan that effectively supports this community.

— StrategyCorp director
Lauren Wyman

that passed directed county staff to distribute the report to the four local municipalities and ask for their endorsement of a seven-member board that will begin working to address these issues.

Earlier in the presentation Wyman said that a key part of the process moving forward is to have different agencies that work on these issues communicate with each other and share ideas.

"One of the greatest values of this plan is its ability to break down silos, share data, create change ... to develop a plan that effectively supports this community," she said. "It opens up the conversation between service providers where those conversations don't always exist."



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Vaping violations on the rise

STEPHEN PETRICK

Special to the Echo

The number of nicotine selling violations issued by the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit (HKPRDHU) rose steadily in 2021; a sign that the health unit will have to continue to focus on educating the public about the harmful impacts of smoking.

HKPR Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Natalie Bocking, unveiled statistics at the Jan. 20 health board meeting, held virtually.

She said the two tobacco control officers employed by the health unit issued 352 "warnings" to local vendors in 2021, up from just 81 warnings in 2020.

Those warnings led to 31 actual charges in 2021, up from 10 charges in 2020.

This increase came despite the fact that those officers were redeployed to work in COVID-related programs for much of 2021.

"Most of the charges in 2021 were issues related to selling vaping products to underage youth," she said, explaining that new legislation prohibits vendors from selling vaping products with certain levels of nicotine.

"There are tremendous harmful impacts associated with youth taking up vaping and often taking up smoking cigarettes after that," she said.

The health unit provides services for those trying to quit smoking. For details visit, hkpr.on.ca/my-health/quitting-smoking/.

Health unit hopes to resume halted services soon, (but knows COVID is here to stay)

STEPHEN PETRICK

Special to the Echo

The local health unit hopes to resume some of its services in the coming months, if the Omicron variant wanes.

The Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge Health Unit's school-based immunization program has been on and off since the start of the pandemic, but the unit intends to resume it by May.

Also, the unit's sexual health clinic, which has been off since the fall, may start in April.

However, several other important programs will remain off for the time being, such as food handler training programs, and sexual health education programs in schools.

The health unit is also awaiting direction from the Ministry of Health on whether it can resume oral health screening programs in schools by March or April.

The news was delivered by Medical Officer of Health Dr. Natalie Bocking in a presentation to Haliburton County councillors at their Jan. 26 virtual meeting.

The presentation was to give an overview of the full scope of the health unit's services. The pandemic has put public health services under a much bigger spotlight, Bocking said. The health unit has been thrust into run-

ning COVID vaccine clinics and other pandemic-related tasks, but, eventually it will have to resume many of its traditional services, which have been limited due to shutdowns and staff being deployed to work on more pressing emergencies.

"At the height of each of the waves, I would estimate that 80 per cent of our resources have been dedicated to COVID response," Bocking said, explaining that work is mostly related to contact tracing and running vaccine clinics.

The daunting new challenges have led to new financial pressures. The unit's 2022 budget included a five per cent increase on the municipal tax levy and Haliburton County taxpayers now contribute to \$535,352 to the unit (additional money has also come from provincial taxpayers).

"We continue to be surprised by COVID and what it continues to bring," Bocking said. "We've had to try and have multiple contingency plans."

Bocking said the health unit now must find a way to resume services and catch up for lost time, but still have plans in place for staff to be re-deployed elsewhere, if necessary, because "COVID-19 is not going anywhere."

"We have areas that need significant catch up dedication. There's a huge cohort of children who have not had preventative oral health screening. We know that childhood immunizations are behind ... it's going to take several years to catch up."

OPP asks public to be prepared for the outdoors

Members of the Haliburton Highlands Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) are again reminding participants in winter activities to take precautions to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience after rescuing a person lost on the Moose Woods Recreational Trails. During the afternoon of Jan. 28, members of the Haliburton Highlands Detachment were called to locate a person who had become lost at Moose Woods, located on Haliburton Lake Road in the Municipality of Dysart et al. At the time, it was dark and temperatures reached negative 39 degrees Celsius. Officers were able to locate the individual and utilize OPP resources to safely transport them to the awaiting Haliburton County Paramedic Services (EMS) for treatment.

All winter recreation participants should consider taking the following precautions:

- Plan your route. Never go out alone. Always tell someone your planned destination and your expected time of return.
- Bring a fully charged mobile phone, extra backup battery and/or a satellite-enabled device to use when an area has poor phone reception.
- Consider downloading a geolocation app, such as What3Words. This app will aid first responders in pinpointing your location when you need help: <https://what3words.com/how-to-use-the-what3words-app/>.
- Do not solely rely on technology for navigation -

bring a map of the area and a compass.

- Avoid unfamiliar areas at night. If going out at night, bring a flashlight, which can be used to signal your location or identify landmarks around you.
- Check the weather and sunrise/sunset times. Please take into consideration that the temperature drops after dark and familiar landmarks become indistinguishable.
- Dress for the weather and wear proper footwear as the weather can change quickly.
- Be prepared and bring items such as water, snacks, matches, a first-aid kit, flashlight and extra gloves, socks and other warm clothing.
- Always have a means to start a fire.
- - If you become lost, remain in place, seek shelter and stay warm.
- Use caution on frozen bodies of water and remember that no ice is safe ice.

If you choose to go out on the ice, carry safety equipment, such as ice picks and throw ropes for self-rescue or to aid others. The response time from emergency personnel may be prolonged due to the vastness of Haliburton County.

Learn more about cold water and ice safety at www.lifesavingsociety.com/water-safety/cold-water-and-ice.aspx.

Submitted

Elmslie continues role as health board chair

STEPHEN PETRICK

Special to the Echo

City of Kawartha Lakes Councillor Doug Elmslie will continue to serve as chair of the Haliburton, Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit (HKPRDHU) in 2022.

Members of the health unit's board voted on Jan. 20 to have Elmslie serve another year as chair, after serving in the role in 2021.

Meanwhile, Cobourg Mayor and Northumberland County Councillor John Henderson was also appointed to continue in his role as vice-chair of the board.

The HKPRDHU's board is made up of elected leaders in the three regions and holds monthly virtual meetings to make financial and management-related decisions that guide public health programs in the region. This now includes COVID-vaccine planning, but also nutrition, sexual health, oral health and workplace health programs, among others.



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HHHS continues recruitment efforts for emergency department staff

SUE TIFFIN

Staff Reporter

The following are brief reports from the Haliburton Highlands Health Services board meeting held virtually on Jan. 27.

HHHS CEO and president Carolyn Plummer said that while the area's two emergency departments have been staffed with the HHHS nursing team and help of agency nursing staff – about eight full-time equivalent staff – “the situation remains precarious.”

She said at this point, coverage is in place until the month of March.

“The continual onboarding of new agency staff is not something that can be sustained over a long period of time; recruiting permanent staff continues to be critical, as does investing in the retention of our current staff,” said Plummer in her CEO report, noting a variety of both recruitment and retention strategies are underway.

Plummer said HHHS continues to face physician shortages, including a decline in available emergency department physician coverage.

“We recognize that despite our best efforts and the collaborative work we are doing with Ontario Health East and other partners, recruitment will continue to be a challenge as healthcare organizations across the province are engaged in similar recruitment activities,” reads her report. “As a result, we are also continuing to engage in data analysis and planning discussions for potential service reductions; more information about this will be available in the coming weeks.”

Deficit increases but financial report ‘encouraging’

David O'Brien, board vice-chair and chair of the finance committee, said the results of the financial report from October and November were more “encouraging,” than those reported up to September.

Currently the organization is facing a \$633,000 deficit, compared to \$613,000 as reported in December.

“So it hasn't gotten any worse, other than for about \$20,000 which is the first time that's happened in a long time,” he told the board. “Normally this would have increased by \$100,000 plus per month, so we could have expected somewhere in the \$830,000 range. So, good work on that ... that we've got that mitigated, but we still have a \$633,000 deficit.”

O'Brien said the significant factors contributing to that deficit remain mostly from ongoing staffing pressures – from



The HHHS Board of Directors meeting was held virtually on Jan. 27./Screenshot

agency work to overtime and sick time – and total lost revenue from non-Ministry of Health sources.

“It's assumed that the additional costs incurred because of the pandemic will be offset with government funding, and we continue to review all cost areas to ensure that we are optimizing the amount of pandemic expenses to be recovered,” he said. “That's a very critical component because we, like all other hospitals, are experiencing heavy increases to our operating bottom line because of COVID, and we're tracking these numbers very carefully.”

O'Brien said a cash deficit had been largely eliminated because of some funding from the province for COVID-19 expense claims from the end of the 2020-2021 fiscal year, and first quarter of the current fiscal year.

He thanked all staff, residents, clients and patients.

“Everybody's doing a marvellous job, we should be standing up proud and holding our head high that we've done what we've been able to do with very little resources,” he said.

Board plans to advocate for nurses, staff, on Bill 124

Bill 124, *Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act*, 2019, generally caps annual salary increases to one per cent for unionized and non-unionized employees in the public sector, including employees of the provincial government, crown agencies, school boards, universities and colleges, hospitals, non-profit long-term care homes, children's aid societies, social service agencies and electricity and energy sectors.

Outside of his report, O'Brien expressed his concern about the impact of the legislation on those working in the health-

care sector, especially as they've worked through the pandemic.

“We know that funding for healthcare has been cut back dramatically over many years, and I'm not pointing the finger at any one government and that has gone back for many, many years,” he said. “The consequence of that of course is that when COVID came along we were ill-prepared to deal with it from an operational and staffing point of view. But, in the end it's the health sector that rose up and put the boots on the ground and were available to beat this COVID to the point that we might get out of it in the foreseeable future. And without that commitment from staff we probably wouldn't be where we are today, well on the way to recovery.”

“It's caused just immeasurable personal and social upheaval within the health profession, both on a personal basis of the employees and the ability of all hospitals and other health organizations to be able to provide service,” said O'Brien.

He said the board should express support for nurses and all other staff affected by the piece of legislation.

“I personally think that this bill is wrong. I don't think it should be applicable to our sector after all we've done,” he said, noting HHHS shouldn't have the kind of deficit he spoke to earlier, “because the money should be coming as quickly as we put the money out the door, because we're putting the money out the door on behalf of the government. And part of that cost is providing the kind of services and support we give to our staff.”

Board chair Jan Walker asked that the board's commitment to looking at a plan to advocate for staff be added to the minutes.

“I think you have full support on that particular item,” she said.

HHHS Foundation celebrates Magic of Giving

Lisa Tompkins, executive director of the HHHS Foundation, spoke to the record results of the Magic of Giving campaign.

“We exceeded last year's results by almost 50 per cent for a total raised of \$243,910,” she said. “That's of course thanks to the extraordinary generosity of some 800 donors across the county and well beyond who made very clear their support of HHHS and healthcare in our community.”

Funds raised supported priority capital equipment including mobile workstations-on-wheels for the new clinical information system and state-of-the-art nurse call bell systems for Highland Wood and Hyland Crest long term care homes. Additionally, it contributed to community support service programs, providing 993 meals for the Meals on Wheels program and 282 trips for medically-required transportation.

“Overall a very successful campaign this year,” said Tompkins. “We're very grateful to the generosity of so many who made it very clear that healthcare is a high priority for them and our local healthcare matters.”

Public consultation open for LTC legislation proposed changes

Proposed regulations under the *Fixing Long-Term Care Act*, 2021 have now been posted for public consultation by the provincial government. The proposed Phase 1 of the regulation is posted for consultation until Feb. 17 at www.ontariocanada.com/registry/.

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Paying attention to food waste

CHRIS DROST

Staff Reporter

How much food waste is your household generating? Have you ever thought why? Did you purchase too much food and it has gone bad? Did you end up not using those leftovers after all?

These are the questions that a new research project through the students of Fleming College's Sustainable Waste Management program, facilitated by U-Links Centre for Community-based Research, will try to answer for the Municipality of Dysart et al.

The Dysart et al environmental manager John Watson, reported to council on Jan. 25 that the municipality has typically provided funding of \$1,500 for past projects with U-Links. He already set aside \$1,500 in the 2022 Environmental Management budget for this purpose, which was subsequently approved by council.

"This project is about before you even get to composting. It is why food is being thrown out," explains Watson. Sometimes it is about food literacy, such as understanding the difference between "best before" and expiry dates. It may also be about how to use food so that everything gets eaten up. Sometimes it is about making better choices in purchasing food.

"The students will be looking at rural areas, including how seasonal use of properties and hunting also generate food waste," explains Watson.

In the fall, at close-up time, or after hunting, the municipality sees a lot of extra food waste coming into the landfill. The goal is to produce some strategies to minimize this problem.

There are three outcomes that the Food Waste Reduction Research project hopes to achieve. One is to produce a list of strategies to reduce food waste in the home. Second, the students will research best practices from other rural communities through literature review and interviews and then third, use all the findings to develop a public education campaign to reduce food waste.

Watson said this project will focus on residential waste, but the students may do some preliminary investigation into strategies for reducing waste from restaurants, food stores, etc.

This is not the first time Dysart et al has partnered with Fleming College's Sustainable Waste Management program and U-Links, which ensures proper research standards are used. In 2019 there was the Plastics Reduction Challenge, Plastic Waste – Litter Reduction in 2020 and Illegal Dumping in 2021. These previous projects have led directly to policy and operational changes in Dysart et al, such as the ban on the sale of bottled water on municipal property and online reporting of illegal dumping.

From a class of about 30 Fleming students, eight have been selected to be team leaders and a kick-off event was held in mid-January. Dysart et al will have a call with the students in four weeks and the final report is expected to be completed in 10 weeks and will include a full list of recommendations for the public education program.

Sadie Fischer, environmental program coordinator at U-Links said the role of U-Links is to assist community organizations in answering research questions. Part of that process is refining the research questions. Another is to pro-

“

This project is about before you even get to composting. It is why food is being thrown out.

— Dysart et al environmental manager, John Watson

vide suggestions on how to answer these questions. Alongside the faculty supervisors, they provide students with research approaches that best suit the project needs.

Part of the Dysart et al project includes a literature review of best practices in waste reduction. In this case, where the main approach is a comprehensive literature review, U-Links will review the bibliography to ensure relevant and current sources are being used.

"If specific protocols are needed for field research, we can provide training or workshops. If the project requires a community survey, we can assist in developing the interview questions," Fischer said.

A team with representatives from Dysart et al, Fleming College and U-Links, will work with the students to make sure they produce the best possible research for the community. Meetings will be held with the students throughout the project cycle for updates and to provide feedback where necessary.

"After our initial Kick-Off meeting, I am very excited to see what the students come up with," adds Fischer.

This project is in support of the County of Haliburton Corporate Climate Change Mitigation Plan which focuses on communicating with residents and businesses how to reduce and divert waste, and supports and promotes backyard composting.

Because of COVID-19 restrictions, most of the research will be conducted remotely. Municipalities, public health units, food security organizations and food waste reduction organizations will be surveyed by the students. This is all set to begin in late January, with findings presented at U-Links Celebration of Research on March 22.

"If time permits, the results will also be shared through a delegation at the Dysart et al Committee of the Whole on April 12," Watson said.

Meanwhile, the new research project is not the only thing the municipality is doing to help reduce waste that ends up in the land fill. Dysart et al has supported the composting of food waste in the past through the sale of backyard composters and digesters. It is also moving ahead this year with the FoodCycler Pilot Project, a 12-week long program for 100 households. The FoodCycler uses electricity to quickly compost food waste into a finished compost product.

Each participating household is required to pay for their FoodCycler and complete surveys upon initial pick-up, at the six-week mark of the pilot and at the end of the 12 weeks. Ideally, a follow-up survey will be conducted six months following the conclusion of the pilot project to help determine the long-term use and viability of the FoodCycler units.



Still Standing: Minden

Jonny Harris, who came to town in Sept. 2020 to film episodes for Minden's *Still Standing* episode, takes a moment to contemplate the Gull River. The episode - which is scheduled to air Feb. 23 at 8 p.m. on CBC - focuses on the three floods Minden has experienced over the past decade, and how the community has come together to bail each other out.

/Photo by Chris Armstrong Photography



Jonny Harris walks down Minden's Bobcaygeon Road during filming of an episode of *Still Standing*.

Every \$1 spent at a local business
drives \$7 into the **local economy.**

#BuyCloseBy

Opportunity for businesses to enhance digital marketing with new workshop

DARREN LUM

Editor

An upcoming workshop is looking to help businesses stand out in the 21st Century with a series of “how to” digital marketing workshops.

Organized by the County of Haliburton Economic Development and Tourism department, this free offering for Haliburton County business owners and entrepreneurs goes beyond most general social media workshops and offers targeted, applicable coaching on very specific social media skills said tourism department’s content creator Thom Lambert.

He said digital marketing is an affordable and effective way for businesses and organizations to communicate with their customers and stakeholders.

“Because of the ease with which content can be shared, it is also one of the most effective ways for businesses within an area like the Haliburton Highlands to collaborate with one another. Social media platforms continue to be one of the most

important tools by which potential visitors to the Haliburton Highlands discover new experiences and make travel decisions,” he wrote in a prepared statement.

There are four workshops, offered bi-weekly starting on Feb. 3. Interested business owners, entrepreneurs, and digital marketing workers can register by contacting Lambert at tlambert@haliburtoncounty.ca, or by registering directly through links posted on social media.

The first workshop is focusing on creating and posting Instagram reels, one of the fastest growing segments of social media. Workshops will be up to 60 minutes long and will include time for participants to ask questions at the end. Each workshop is focused on one topic. The free series is made possible with funding from the Ontario Highlands Tourism Organization through their Tourism Recovery and Innovation Program.

The workshops will be offered via Zoom and are being facilitated by local marketing expert Autumn Wilson, who is the owner of AJW services.

Lambert wrote Wilson “provides social media marketing, training and consult-

ing. She is the past program and operations coordinator for Haliburton County Development Corporation, and past business manager for the Haliburton Highlands Chamber of Commerce.”

Wilson said the best attribute of digital marketing for rural businesses is authenticity.

“In order to see success on social media, brands (businesses) need to show the people behind the business. Consumers are demanding connection. This is something that has become more prevalent since the pandemic with an increase in people turning to social media to find a sense of connection and community,” she wrote in an email message. “Consumers are looking to build meaningful relationships with the brands they follow. They want to know who they are, what they like, what their vision is, what their goals are, etc. The best thing a brand can do is to be true and authentic to who they are as a person so they build relationships with their audience.”

Wilson has been assisting area businesses for the past six years with their social media strategies, teaching people

“the ins and outs” of how social media can lead to business growth and sales.

“There has been growing support from the county tourism department to help businesses improve their digital marketing so we’ve seen a lot of improvements over the years. The ongoing work to expand broadband connection in the county over the last 10 years has also made it easier for rural businesses to have a presence online,” she wrote.

The ever-changing characteristic trait of social media adds to the challenge.

“Consumers are using it in different ways and new platforms emerge all the time. Keeping up with those trends and figuring out which ones to implement for your business can be really challenging. The way to improve is to be dialed in to your target audience - knowing what they like, where they are, what they’re doing, and what they are engaging with online. You don’t want to jump on a new platform or a new trend just because it’s there. You want to make sure that’s where your target audience is before determining how you can use it for your business,” she wrote.



Embracing winter

Last month, before the recent snowstorms helped to bring several inches of snow to the Highlands, there was still enough for some intrepid outdoor enthusiasts to enjoy the winter, as seen with Jason Donaldson and his friend Kaspar Brohm Nordic skiing at the Barnum Creek Nature Reserve on Jan. 9 in Haliburton. Located off Gelerf Road 1, and accessed at Gould Crossing, the reserve is available for hiking, snowshoeing and backcountry Nordic skiing. /DARREN LUM Staff

Haliburton is a “four-season” tourism market

STEPHEN PETRICK

Special to the Echo

Haliburton County is more than just a summer cottage community. It’s a four-season destination now and the timing has never been better to market it as such.

That’s the message that new county tourism manager Tracie Bertrand wants known.

“We want to take those traditional visitors that are coming in that [summer] tourism season and create that sense of loyalty, so they visit in the winter and the fall and the spring,” she said.

Bertrand started in her role in early January and will be tasked with helping Haliburton County carry out its Destination Development Plan, a plan that was written in 2019 with help from a Vancouver firm and suggested the region be marketed as a tourism destination in a more widespread fashion, with both the public and private sectors working together.

Her hiring is one step in a broader movement to build tourism and economic growth in the region. Scott Ovell, was recently hired to serve in a new county position, as director of economic development and tourism.

One of Ovell’s first steps was to, in turn, hire Bertrand, as the new tourism manager. Having two people in leadership positions work on tourism is a departure for the county that had one tourism director for eight years. Past director, Amanda Virtanen left the position and took a job outside of the county last summer.

Bertrand brings a wealth of experience to the role. She was the director of tourism for Peterborough and the Kawarthas Economic Development for five years. While there, she worked on marketing programs and initiatives designed to lure investments.

While the word “Peterborough” might make people think urban, she explained the organization was in the game of promoting rural tourism. She learned that, in Canada, and particularly in the Greater Toronto Area, people are very interested in exploring rural regions. She believes areas like Haliburton County can compete for these visitors, just as much as other well-known cottage areas, like Muskoka.

“People are looking for that authentic Canadian feel,” she said. “Because of COVID, the restrictions, the component of being outside as much as possible has really shined a spotlight on rural Ontario destinations. That was there before but now it’s in full demand.”

Bertrand has spent most of her life in the Kawartha region and has a diploma in business administration and marketing from Fleming College. She describes herself as a “country” girl, as she, her husband and two teenage daughters love being outside and engaged in activities, such as fishing and hunting.

She said that, since starting her role, she has been meeting with other people connected to the tourism industry, to get to know them and their thoughts on how tourism in the region can be promoted.

“My first task is to be a visitor; look at this place through the eyes of a visitor; get out as much as I can, meet and see as many of the stakeholders and businesses as much as I can,” she explained.

She said the county has data which is showing that its growth rate is ahead of Canada’s overall growth rate. As Haliburton County is becoming less of a secret to the rest of the country, there’s tremendous opportunity to build on growth.

“Before we’d have to market like crazy to get people to come here; now we don’t have to,” she said. “We know the demand is here but we need to capitalize on it.”



Remax real estate agents for the project Lorne Reano and Ben Burns, from left, developer and founder of NOMI Resort Club Elise Blouin, project's structural engineer Renzo Martire, executive chef of the resort Hugo Saenz during the breaking ground ceremony for NOMI's 46 new vacation home units. /KRISTENA SCHUTT-MOORE, Staff

Development continues at NOMI Resort Club

KRISTENA SCHUTT-MOORE

Staff Reporter

Ground was officially broken for the first vacation home units of the NOMI Resort Club on Thursday, Jan. 27. The ceremony started with the development team members walking down the red carpet to the main podium where each was given the chance to speak on NOMI's journey.

The project's structural engineer Renzo Martire gave the first speech about the development project outside in front of the location for the first unit.

He said that NOMI was going to create a beautiful living style with very sleek and streamlined buildings.

"The goal is to keep this environment with the housing and living for everyone who is going to stay here. The design is simplified and beautiful, and it's not taking away from these beautiful surroundings," Martire said.

The plan includes using recycled materials to complete the units and keeping nature first and foremost throughout the NOMI Resort property.

The NOMI Resort Club itself has been up and running for several years now offering health and wellness treatments to customers from around the world. These wellness programs are already on track to expand for both indoor and outdoor programs that will take place throughout the year. They also have a full service restaurant called LANDS850 that has been featured in many magazines. NOMI is being called

Canada's newest wellness community.

At the same time, NOMI is moving forward with its development. In total the plan includes space for 46 cottage-styled units that the public are able to purchase. Currently there are several designs available, including resort style condominiums and urban loft villas with pricing starting at \$745,699.

The NOMI Resort Club is located at 4727 Elephant Lake Road, on Benoit Lake. There are currently 31 kilometres of walking trails on site, with plans for three new walking trails to be created in the future. There will also be a sports court, outdoor lounges, a club house, a boat house and a private dock out onto the lake. Those who purchase one of the 46 private residences soon to be available gain full access to the resort club and all its services, including exclusive offers such as food tasting and wellness services.

Before she cut the ceremonial ribbon developer and founder of NOMI Resort Club Elise Blouin said, "We are very excited to move forward in this journey to come, and what we are going to be doing. It's important to acknowledge that we've got the ability to grow the community back, and to provide a great opportunity for employment, and for everybody who is going to be part of our journey going forward. So thank you, thank you very much."

Those interested in getting more information on the restaurant, resort or the development of the units are invited to visit NOMI's Facebook page or website www.nomiresort.com.



NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

PROPOSED ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENT
TO ZONING BY-LAW 2005-120 OF THE
MUNICIPALITY OF DYART ET AL

- **DATE:** TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22nd, 2022
- **TIME:** 9:05 am
- **LOCATION:** TAKE NOTICE THAT THE PUBLIC MEETING FOR ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENT WILL TAKE PLACE AS AN ELECTRONIC PUBLIC MEETING ONLY

Application:

Lands of Carnochan

- Purpose and Effect: The application will rezone the lands from Rural Type 1 (RU1) Zone to Rural Type 1 (RU1) Zone and Highway Commercial-XX (CH-XX) Exception Zone to permit a self-service storage building and an Accessory Dwelling unit located in a non-residential building on the proposed commercial portion of the subject lands.
- Location: Kennisis Lake Road, legally known as Part Lots 16 to 18 Concession 1 and Part Lot 17 Concession 2, Part 3 Plan 19R-2366.
- In the Geographic Township of Havelock, Municipality of Dysart et al.

There will not be an in-person meeting; this meeting will be conducted in an electronic format only.

For more information about electronic meetings and public participation in an electronic meeting, contact the Municipal Clerk at mbishop@Dysartetal.ca.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: about this application, including a copy of the draft by-law, is available by contacting Kris Orsan, Senior at korsan@dysartetal.ca.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS MATTER INCLUDING INFORMATION ABOUT APPEAL RIGHTS: Contact the Planning and Land Information Department during regular office hours, Monday to Friday.

Dated at the Township of Dysart, this 1st day of February, 2022.

Kris Orsan, CPT, Senior Planner
Planning and Land Information
Municipality of Dysart et al
135 Maple Avenue, Haliburton, Ontario K0M 1S0
Phone: 705-457-1740 ext. 626
E-mail: korsan@dysartetal.ca

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Hillsides
6. A way to ingest
9. Large number
13. Southeastern Minnesota city
14. Cronies
15. Having sufficient skill, knowledge
16. Supplements with difficulty
17. Former VP nominee Palin
18. Cambodian monetary unit
19. Where coaches work
21. Secret political clique
22. A type of lute
23. Tan
24. Empire State
25. Where golfers begin
28. For each
29. Muslim inhabitants of the Philippines
31. Bird genus
33. Popular Dave Matthews Band song
36. Domesticates
38. "Boardwalk Empire" actress Gretchen
39. Asian antelope
41. One who takes apart
44. Kin
45. Dresses
46. Says something about you (abbr.)
48. Doctor of Education
49. One quintillion bytes (abbr.)
51. Overcharge
52. Sailboats
54. Indian musical patterns
56. Predisposition to a condition
60. Share a common boundary with
61. Wide
62. Skin disease
63. Monetary unit of Samoa
64. Source of the Blue Nile
65. Instrument
66. Red deer
67. Unidentified flying object
68. Bar or preclude

CLUES DOWN

1. Flying insects
2. Strong alcoholic spirit
3. Old
4. Moves in slowly
5. Symbol for tin
6. Having certain appendages
7. Expression of sorrow or pity
8. Type of hormone (abbr.)
9. One with an unjustified mistrust
10. Hebrew calendar month
11. Pure
12. LSU football coach
14. Unbroken views
17. Fathers
20. Part of a race
21. Hairstyle
23. Fifth note of a major scale
25. Body art
26. Amounts of time
27. Designed chairs
29. Sensational dramatic piece
30. Arrangement of steps
32. Classifies
34. Young child
35. Oh, no!
37. Astronomical period of about 18 years
40. Not or
42. Poke fun at
43. Consisting of roots
47. " __ Humbug!"
49. A way to remove
50. A confusion of voices and other sounds
52. Keyed instrument
53. Varnishes
55. Unpleasantly sticky substance
56. Unable to hear
57. A short erect tail
58. Indicates interest
59. Flow or leak through
61. British thermal unit
65. Iron

Answers on page 17



The Polar Bear Challenge is not going to be held this year, but the Haliburton and District Lions Club will be still donating like other years. /FILE DARREN LUM Staff

Lions are here to help

This Feb. 15 is Lions Club International Foundation (LCIF) Childhood Cancer Day.

Family Day weekend has traditionally been the time for the Municipality of Dysart et al's Frost Festival and the Haliburton Lions Polar Bear Challenge – when participants take a short swim/run into Head Lake.

What do these two events have in common? Childhood Cancer Day is the day we remind our community that the Haliburton and Distict Lions Club are here to help. The Polar Bear Challenge is the day we raise funds for the Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation and for the Hospital for Sick Children Garron Family Cancer Centre. That's right, both events have childhood cancer components.

Well, here we are again, still enduring the pandemic and the Frost Festival and

the Polar Bear Challenge are once again cancelled. Will that stop us? No.

I am writing this article today to let you know your Haliburton Lions are honouring the Childhood Cancer Day with a donation of \$500 to the Garron Family Cancer Centre and a donation of \$250 to the Childhood Cancer Clinic at Peterborough Regional Hospital. We are also sending this shout out to you to remind you we are here for any local family for whom childhood cancer is a reality. Just contact me at gatesstelter@gmail.com or (705) 455-2772 or any member of the Haliburton Lions and we will help. There are many avenues and ways we can help a family. We serve and childhood cancer is a pillar of service dear to our hearts.

Submitted by Lion Gail Stelter, chair Haliburton Lions Childhood Cancer Committee

2022 Poker run cancelled

ALEX GALLACHER

Special to the Echo

The 2022 Poker Run, a major fundraising event to benefit the Haliburton Fire Department has been cancelled for the second year in row. Event host, the Haliburton Forest and Wild Life Reserve announced the Poker Run scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 12 wasn't running this year because of the rise of COVID-19 cases in the area. It was scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 12.

“COVID was really the only decision that has to be made,” Haliburton Forest general manager Tegan Legge said. “For the Poker Run to truly be a fun and successful event, it does mean that people have to gather in cabins to get food and such so I’m sure there could’ve been a way we could’ve hosted the event but it would’ve have been in the spirit of the event. Why take the chance to possibly become a super spreader, when we can just delay the event and pick another time when it’s safer and we can all enjoy each other’s company again.”

Last held in 2020 shortly before the initial lockdown, the Poker Run is a special event as it serves as a massive fundraiser for the Haliburton Fire Department. Over

the years, this event has been a gigantic help to the fire fighters. Allowing them to purchase things like a Snowbulance, a rescue boat and the "jaws of life," all things that have greatly improved the safety of the residents of the County.

While the event will not be held, the Reserve still plans on donating what they can to the fire department. However, this will be done online over the next few weeks. The Poker Run has been donating to the firefighters for many years, and hopes to continue the trend well into the future.

"The funds they raise for us we use for unique and different equipment," Haliburton Fire Chief Mike Iles said. "It's equipment that helps augment the job and upgrade the equipment to make our jobs more efficient. It's not spent on day to day things like purchasing hoses and such."

The most recent Poker Run was able to raise nearly \$20,000 for the Haliburton Fire Department and the Reserve hopes to beat the goal when they are able to host the event again. As Legge and her team move right into planning for the 2023 Poker Run, the citizens of Haliburton County wait patiently for the return of the iconic and timeless Poker Run.

Three years in – Municipality of HE – Mayor Dave Burton

CHRIS DROST

Staff Reporter

It has been just over three years since municipal councils began their current term of office. With the next municipal election now less than a year away, we have reached out to invite local political representatives to answer a few questions about their background and how it has helped them in their role, what they see as their greatest success so far, the most difficult challenge, and what they would like to accomplish in their community in the year ahead.

What is the cumulative time you have spent as a municipal representative for this municipality? (Is this your first term or have you served for multiple terms?)
I have served Highlands East for 16 years, four terms.

What in your personal background/experience has best helped you to be an effective member of council?

Prior to Highlands East [council], I was on the Oro-Medonte council for six years which helped prepare me for the role of reeve, now mayor. I owned and operated my own business. I treat what I do like my business. I have taken a business approach to what I do. If you think about it, running a municipality is very much the same as running a business, like a board of a corporation. In the case of the municipality, you get the funds before you spend them, instead of after you earn them, as in a business. I was also president of the Wilbermere Lake Association and Branch 624 Wilberforce Legion, and was on the Highlands East Fire department and president of the Algonquin Gateway Business Association in Harcourt. I was the chair of the Eastern Ontario's Warden Caucus and am now president of the Good Roads Association.

This all helped groom me for this position.

Three years in to this mandate, what do you believe has been this council's greatest achievement so far?

COVID-19 has definitely put a difficult spin on everything we have done. Council has entrusted the CAO and myself to carry out business during COVID-19. We have worked as a team.

Is there anything council has made a decision on in the past three years that you wish you could have a chance to re-do?

No, nothing. I have a very good working council. They don't have to agree with me on everything, but they are a good team. We get things accomplished.

What is this council's greatest challenge in the year ahead?

Let's get back to normal as much as possible doing business. We have no real big projects. We just try to do business as usual, but it is a challenge. We are blessed with good employees and staff.

One of the challenges is trying to encourage groups and volunteers, to get them back after COVID-19. This is why at the recent council meeting, I put forward the opportunity for non-profits to be able to apply for funding.

What do you hope this council can achieve in its last months in office?

We hope to get the bridge work completed and I would like to see us get a start on Herlihey Park. Maybe we can get the parking lots and some of the trails started this year.



Highlands East's Mayor Dave Burton is eager to get things back to normal after all the challenges doing business during COVID-19. /Submitted by Mayor Dave Burton

From humble beginnings, beauty springs forth

community news

west guilford

Eleanor Cooper
754-2278

This may seem like a strange time to be pondering the miracle of growth. So much is buried in frozen earth under depths of earth and snow. However, a plain brown bulb was given to us fully two months ago, only the bulb and a package of earth with instruction of what to do with it. For a few weeks nothing happened, then one morning after I'd talked to it and watered it, a green shoot shot up. Ya-ay! It's growing. The first measurements began later on. Presently the stalk was five inches tall. A new shoot grew beside it, but of course it wouldn't be tall like this first one. Week by week the stalk grew.

Then it came to be 13 inches tall with reddish bulbs, just buds on top. It was time to move it to a shelf where there was more light. The short stalk grew taller. The day came when a bright red blossom appeared. Then in a few days three buds sprang into view, which were so big and glorious in the sun from the window! Now what was this? Yes, the shorter stalk was extending itself and two large buds, then three of them pushed out. While the three blooms were becoming old and somewhat withered the new blossoms were emerging. Such joy to watch them changing! Imagine all the colour from one small brown bulb. How could you guess all this from that small item set in the pot of brown earth?

Other folk have observed a large, pure white top of a tall stalk, another orange-red colour that keeps coming. Still another the growth of many red blooms. These latter ones appeared when the stalks were well begun, but mine grew from scratch and continue to be a wonder day-by-day. Thanks to the Creator who imagined all this! The reason this makes the West Guilford News is that they were Christmas gifts. Thanks to all. No news is too small for the column. Just let me know.



The BIA is hosting it's Annual General Meeting on Zoom. The meeting will be held online on Thursday, February 17, 7pm.

**Please join us by emailing: haliburtonbia@mail.com
Information on how to attend will be sent to you.**

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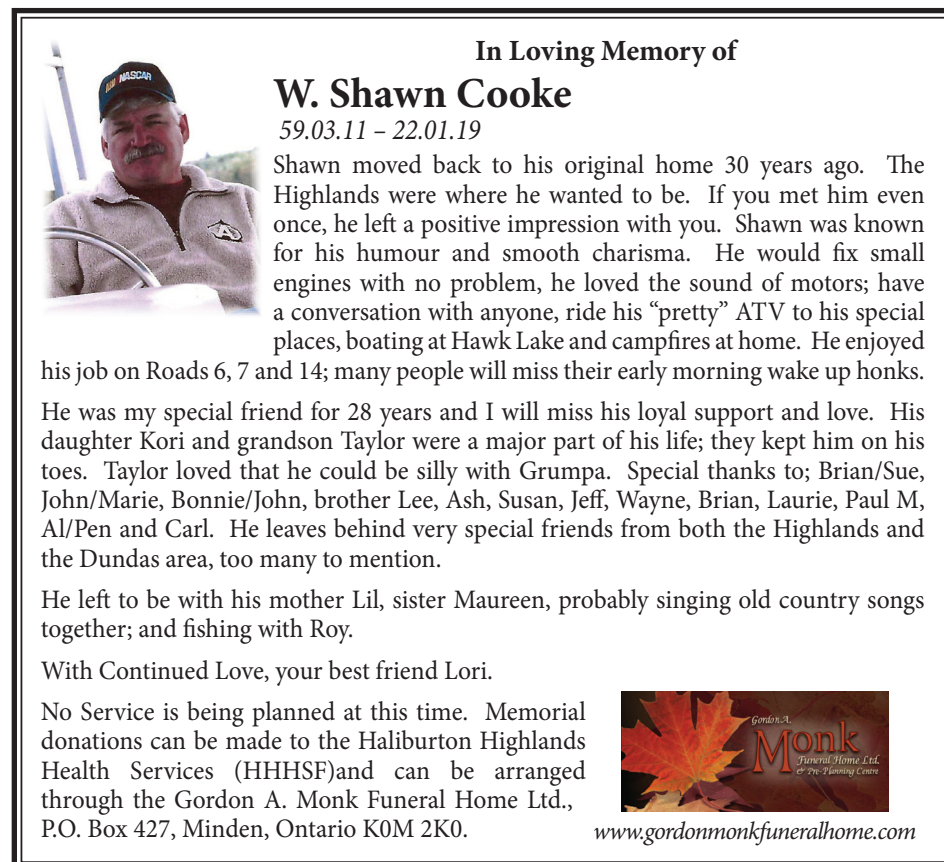
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Shawn moved back to his original home 30 years ago. The Highlands were where he wanted to be. If you met him even once, he left a positive impression with you. Shawn was known for his humour and smooth charisma. He would fix small engines with no problem, he loved the sound of motors; have a conversation with anyone, ride his "pretty" ATV to his special places, boating at Hawk Lake and campfires at home. He enjoyed his job on Roads 6, 7 and 14; many people will miss their early morning wake up honks.

He was my special friend for 28 years and I will miss his loyal support and love. His daughter Kori and grandson Taylor were a major part of his life; they kept him on his toes. Taylor loved that he could be silly with Grumpa. Special thanks to; Brian/Sue, John/Marie, Bonnie/John, brother Lee, Ash, Susan, Jeff, Wayne, Brian, Laurie, Paul M, Al/Pen and Carl. He leaves behind very special friends from both the Highlands and the Dundas area, too many to mention.

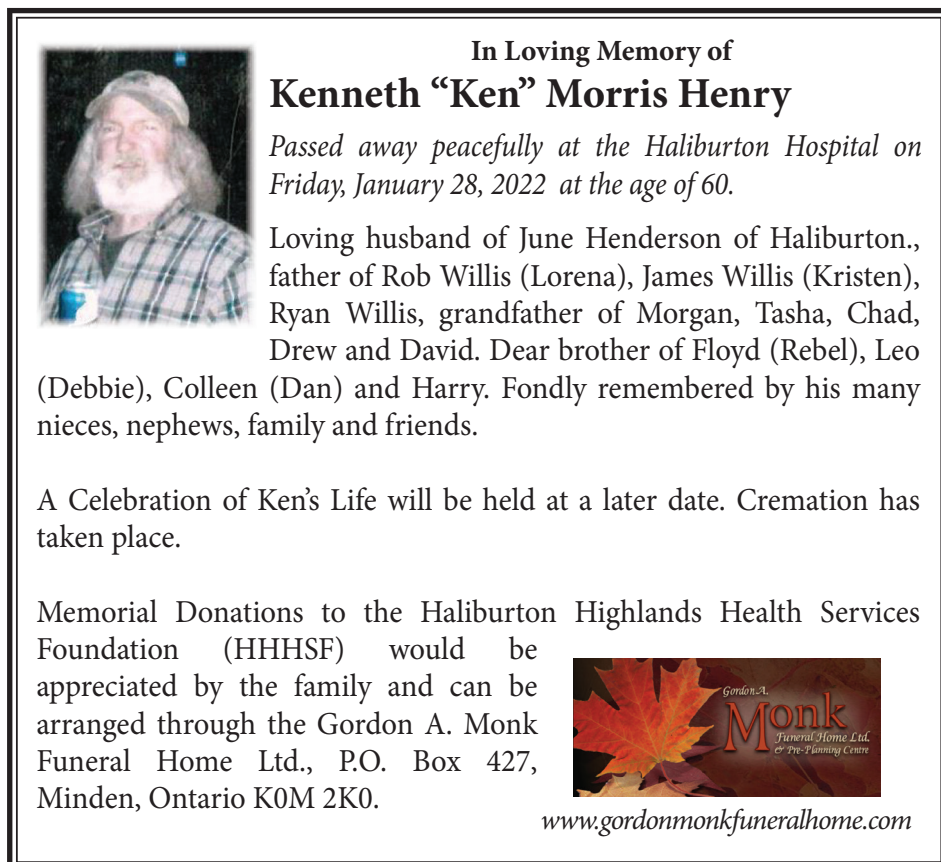
He left to be with his mother Lil, sister Maureen, probably singing old country songs together; and fishing with Roy.

With Continued Love, your best friend Lori.

No Service is being planned at this time. Memorial donations can be made to the Haliburton Highlands Health Services (HHHSF) and can be arranged through the Gordon A. Monk Funeral Home Ltd., P.O. Box 427, Minden, Ontario K0M 2K0.



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**In Loving Memory of
Kenneth "Ken" Morris Henry**
Passed away peacefully at the Haliburton Hospital on Friday, January 28, 2022 at the age of 60.

Loving husband of June Henderson of Haliburton., father of Rob Willis (Lorena), James Willis (Kristen), Ryan Willis, grandfather of Morgan, Tasha, Chad, Drew and David. Dear brother of Floyd (Rebel), Leo (Debbie), Colleen (Dan) and Harry. Fondly remembered by his many nieces, nephews, family and friends.

A Celebration of Ken's Life will be held at a later date. Cremation has taken place.

Memorial Donations to the Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation (HHHSF) would be appreciated by the family and can be arranged through the Gordon A. Monk Funeral Home Ltd., P.O. Box 427, Minden, Ontario K0M 2K0.



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INSIDE
THIS WEEK:

HOME FROM KABUL

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MIGHTY MIDGETS

Highland Storm does hometown proud in prestigious hockey competition

ROBIN SPOTTED

Christmas Bird Count includes unofficial sighting of robin on December 31

THE ECHO

HALIBURTON COUNTY

TUESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2007

VOL. 124 No. 2 \$1.25 INCL. GST

Fewer kids may lead to fewer teachers

JESSICA YOUNG
Staff Reporter

For the past few years, Archie Stouffer, Stuart Baker, J. Douglas Hodgson, Wilberforce and Cardiff elementary schools have noticed a three-to-four per cent drop in students and the secondary school will be feeling the effects this fall.

As a result of fewer children advancing through the grades, Haliburton Highlands Secondary School will notice a decline in Grade 9 student enrollment in September, possibly resulting in the loss of two teachers, says principal Gary Brohman.

"You never know about lay offs because there are teachers who take maternity leave or there will be some teachers who retire," Brohman says. "My hope is that nobody gets laid off, but with declining enrollment, that's a reality. Fewer kids means fewer teachers. We will probably lose two teachers next year."

Paul Doiron, superintendent of elementary and secondary school operations for Trillium Lakelands District School Board, is a bit more optimistic. "We probably don't have to lay off any teachers," he says.

Doiron sees the fall in numbers as a reflection of the declining birthrate in Ontario and the county's older population.

"In most of rural Ontario, there has been a decreased birth rate. It has significance when younger folks are having fewer children. We know our society is aging. We have more boomers reaching retirement age than young people in the

See **Young families** page 12



CASEY LESSARD/Echo

Frosty the snow racer

Brayden Frost pushes his massive snowball into the lead in a race against his friends in the J Douglas Hodgson playground Monday. "Now that there's snow," Brayden said, "it's awesome because we got to do our annual snowball race." He and his friends were only able to have their race after about 10 cm of snow fell overnight. The snowfall was an answer to the prayers of many in the area whose businesses rely on traditional winter conditions for tourist dollars.

Snowbirds flock to MP's passport clinic

GREG HOEKSTRA
Staff Reporter

Well over 100 people turned out last week for a passport clinic hosted by local MP Barry Devolin – many in anticipation of looming travel restrictions slated to take effect two weeks from today.

As of January 23, any Canadian hoping to fly to the United States will require a passport. What's more, within two years' time, the same requirements will be extended to those crossing the border by both land and sea.

Devolin says the new requirements, which are part of a larger American initiative to prevent terrorism, have prompted more Canadians than ever to

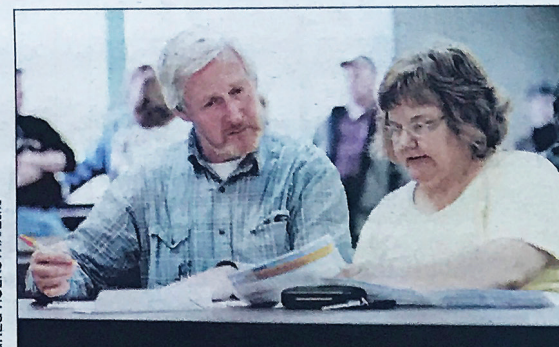
apply for a passport, which has created delays and setbacks in Passport Canada offices.

"They're running more than double their normal rate, and the line ups at some passport offices are hours long," he says.

Deborah Flood, who brought her 17-year-old son Brad to Thursday's clinic to apply for his first passport, says the U.S. regulations were the sole factor that drove her to visit last week's clinic.

"We don't travel there often but Brad's father lives down there so we need to be able to get back and forth just in case," she says.

Richard Burns of Haliburton has had a passport before but he too agrees that, at this point, his only reason for needing a passport will be in case he



GREG HOEKSTRA/Echo

It's estimated that more than 100 people, including Jack and Loretta Billings of Gooderham, turned out last Thursday for a passport clinic in anticipation of new rules for entering the U.S..

decides to venture south of the border.

"I just thought I might be doing a little travelling to the

States soon," says Burns, following the principle that it's

See **Heavy demand** page 5

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TWELVE MILE LAKE ROAD \$1,995,000

A RARE FIND! 1677 feet of frontage and 6+ acres fronting on both beautiful Twelve Mile Lake and Little Boshkung Lake. This point lot is totally private and takes in multiple exposures and has stunning lake views. The historic "Strathcona Lodge" was located here. The original foundation is still present and has the potential to be built on. Two small historic cabins are also on the subject property. Don't miss this opportunity to build your dream home or getaway on one of the most peaceful settings in Haliburton County.
Price is plus HST



WENONA LAKE ROAD \$799, 000

Looking for privacy in a large, spacious home on a year-round road, close to Haliburton Village? Stop looking! This amazing 4+bed/3 bath home on 50+ acres has everything you need. Warm wood finishes welcome you into a large eat-in kitchen, highlighted with the character and charm of an antique wood cookstove. Pantry for added storage. Two living rooms provide space for the whole family. A large garage with commercial size door offers amazing opportunities for the mechanically inclined. Hardwood forest with pretty trails for outdoor adventures. Enjoy more of the outdoors with Wenona Lake boat launch minutes away.



UNICORN ROAD \$549,000

Your opportunity for a secluded, peaceful off grid Haliburton retreat is here! This 237 acres is the perfect destination to enjoy nature's natural beauty. Fantastic trails throughout the property. Nestled amongst the trees with a tranquil view of one of the many ponds, is a cute 22 x 22 cabin. The wood finishings throughout creates a warm and cozy feeling. Settle in and warm up in front of the wood burning stove. 24 x 24 detached garage is the ideal building to store all of your year round toys. Quick access to amenities in Haliburton Village and cell service throughout the property keeps you in the loop while enjoying your escape from the hustle and bustle.



KAWAGAMA LAKE \$279,000

Stunning south views across the lake. This property has a fantastic shoreline of mixed sand/gravel gradual entry to the water. Hydro is at the lot line and there is good cell service. This is easily accessible from either marina on the lake. Enjoy this affordable lot in the summer while you make your plans for your new cottage. Great fishing year-round and fantastic snowmobiling in the winter.



6 WEEKS TILL SPRING!!

It's a Seller's Market!!
Have your property listed before the rest and attract those buyers anxious to spend summer in the Highlands

Call Linda today for your FREE evaluation 705.457.3461